

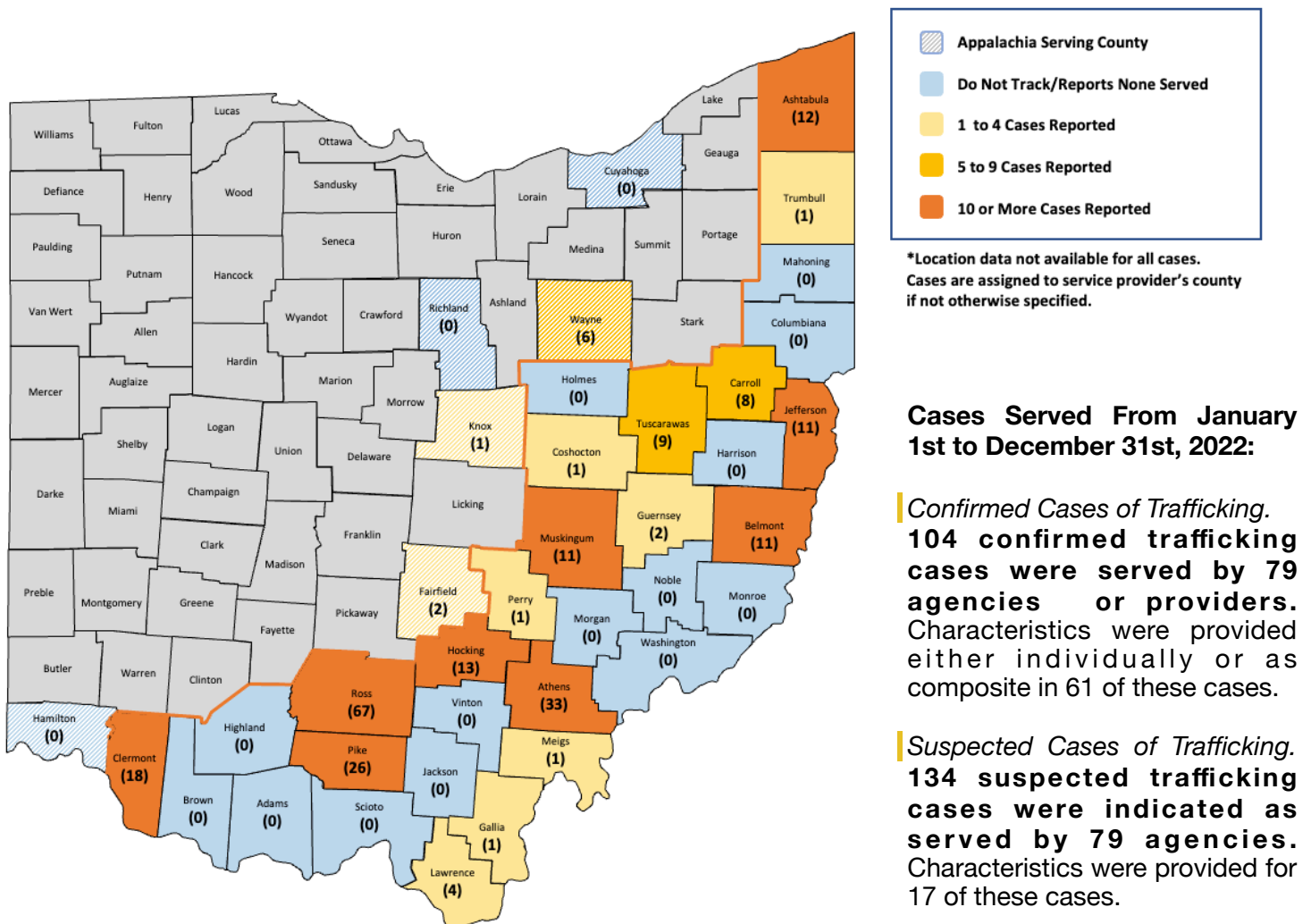
Second Interim Report of Findings from the Appalachian Ohio Human Trafficking Prevalence Study

Thank you to all! As the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio's inaugural Pillar Fellow, Christi Scott Bartman has partnered with the Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) to establish baseline data on how many young people are either trafficked or at high risk of being trafficked in Appalachian Ohio. This information gathering initiative will provide a rough baseline of trafficking cases to identify potential missing populations, begin to measure prevalence of familial trafficking, assess the role drug use plays in trafficking, construct case profiles to facilitate identification of future cases, and examine what response strategies may be most effective based upon a regional needs assessment. From these insights we can together build a strong response and prevention network across Appalachian Ohio.

This report captured data from 79 providers and agencies across Appalachian Ohio. Based on these responses, the majority state that they could or currently do provide services to survivors of human trafficking (80%). Around 12% of responding agencies/providers reported that they do not track these cases or are uncertain if they have served any individuals who have been trafficked (n=9). 7 respondents reported that they do not provide these services. In this report the case profiles and services provided by this network of providers is compiled and summarized.

A total of 238 cases were reported from January 1st to December 31st, 2022. In-depth profiles were provided on 78 cases with some profiles representing a composite of more than one case.

Total Reported Suspected and Confirmed Human Trafficking Cases



Appalachian Ohio: Survivor Case Profiles and Summary

Survivor Case Demographics: Figure 1: Type of Exploitation: (n=78)

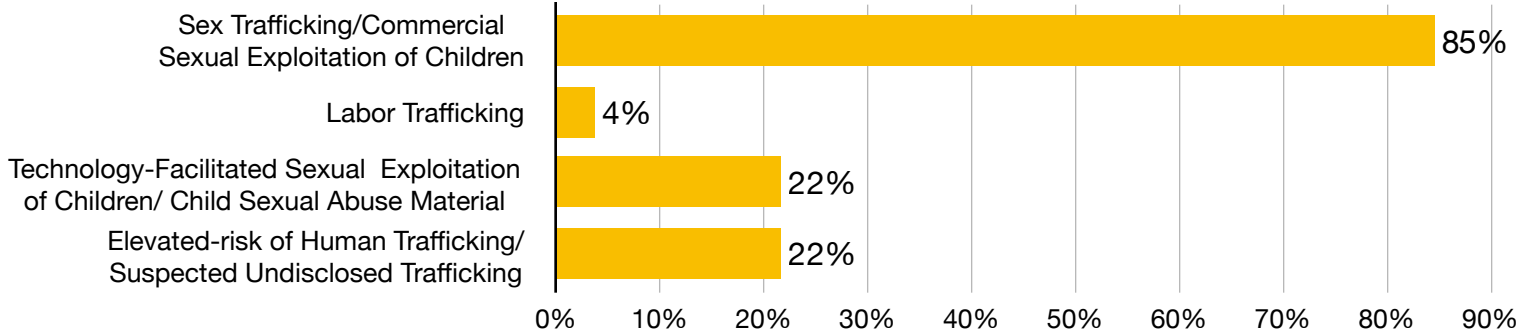


Figure 2: Age of Individual (n=63)

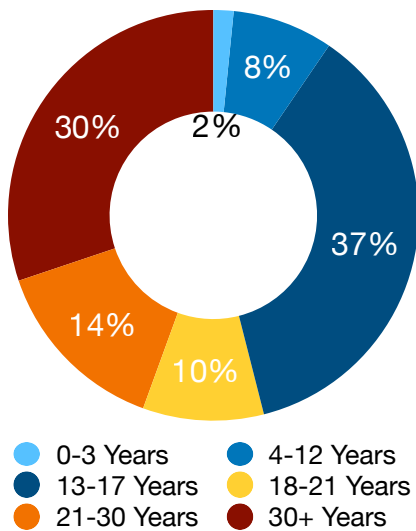
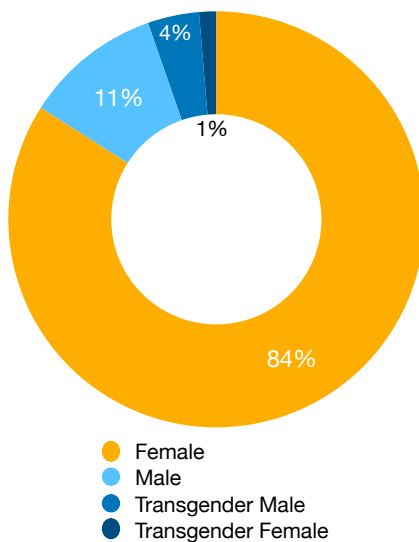


Figure 3: Gender of Individual (n=75)



Building a Prevention Network. Looking at the various forms of human trafficking (see Figure 1), sex trafficking and commercial exploitation of children remain the most frequently identified, accounting for 85% of all cases. Statewide pushes to raise awareness and increased access to national professional education on sex trafficking by platforms like the National Human Trafficking Resource Center may account for these higher identification rates.

Responding agencies reported concurrent use of technologies (social media, cam sites, etc.) as a key component in 22% sex trafficking cases. Respondents indicated meeting of unknown individuals online in 22 out of the 78 cases that we have in-depth profiles. The use of online technology to groom and exploit individuals is a growing concern. Advanced training on this aspect of grooming is recommended to enhance prevention throughout the Appalachian area.

In compiling data from 2022 we find that the previous disparity found in the first interim report has been resolved. With 104 confirmed cases and 134 suspected cases our findings are aligned with expected distributions. In considering how we transition from suspected cases to confirmed cases it may be helpful to establish a common threshold for confirmation and develop skills to identify less overt but significant indicators of elevated risk or undisclosed trafficking. Likewise, by looking at what factors are most commonly targeted by traffickers our network can identify opportunities for early preventative intervention. Lastly, labor trafficking continues to be under identified and low representation of these cases are consistent with other statewide statistics (Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force Report - November 2021). A focused analysis of what profile factors may present barriers to identification of labor trafficking could greatly increase regional efficacy in assisting in cases of labor trafficking.

Identifying Under-Represented Populations. Additional data provided by adult serving agencies demonstrate a more complex trend on age than previously indicated (see Figure 2). We see a higher rate of identification and intervention as the adults' age increases. Youth serving agencies, such as Child Advocacy Centers, constitute the higher than usual efficacy in early identification of trafficking cases involving youth. This is critical as studies find that most grooming and initial exploitation occurs prior to the age of 18 with most adult survivors reporting being trafficked

Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Identifying Under-Represented Populations (cont.) prior to the age of 16 (Roe-Sepowitz et.al, 2019). Data indicates that due to the the typical separation of youth and adult services, youth that are not identified prior to transition age are less likely to be identified until age 30 or older. Greater resources are needed to identify exploited individuals prior to age 18 as well as barriers to identification of trafficking cases involving persons in their 20s. Prevention can also be facilitated by the implementation or increase in age-appropriate education of youth on how to identify manipulative practices and grooming. Programs like My Life, My Choice and investment in Ending the Game curriculum for providers could greatly enhance prevention and educational intervention.

Gender and racial profiles remain largely unchanged from the previous report with trafficked persons being disproportionately female and white. Gender data is consistent with national findings especially in sex trafficking cases and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Racial data is consistent with regional dem-

Figure 4: Race/Ethnicity of Individual (n=70)

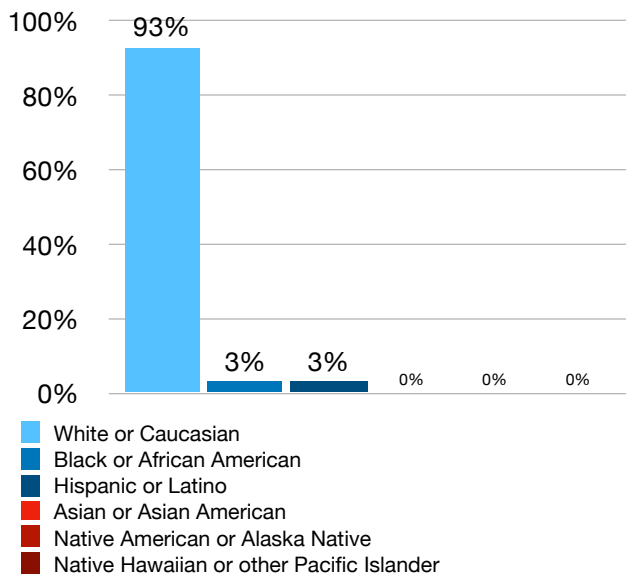
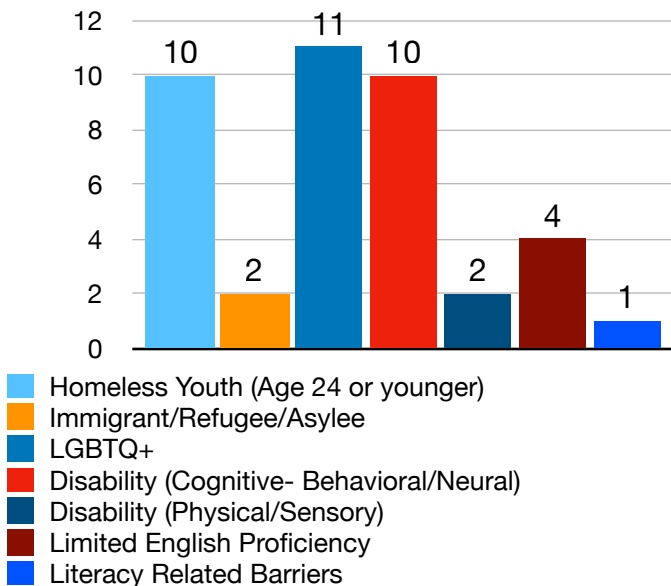


Figure 5: Special Class (n=30)



ographics. With this prevailing racial homogeneity, focus should be given to connect minority populations with services as access disparities may be higher when prevalence of a given population is low. Additionally, under-identified populations may be targeted by traffickers as they are less likely to be identified by our networks.

Transgender populations are identified as victims of trafficking in around 5% of all cases. Transgender persons have been found to encounter socio-ecological experiences that traffickers may frequently seek to exploit. Factors may include a lack of support networks, socio-economic inequality, stigma, a higher likelihood of homelessness, and systemic marginalization (Tomasiewicz, 2018, USDOS, 2022).

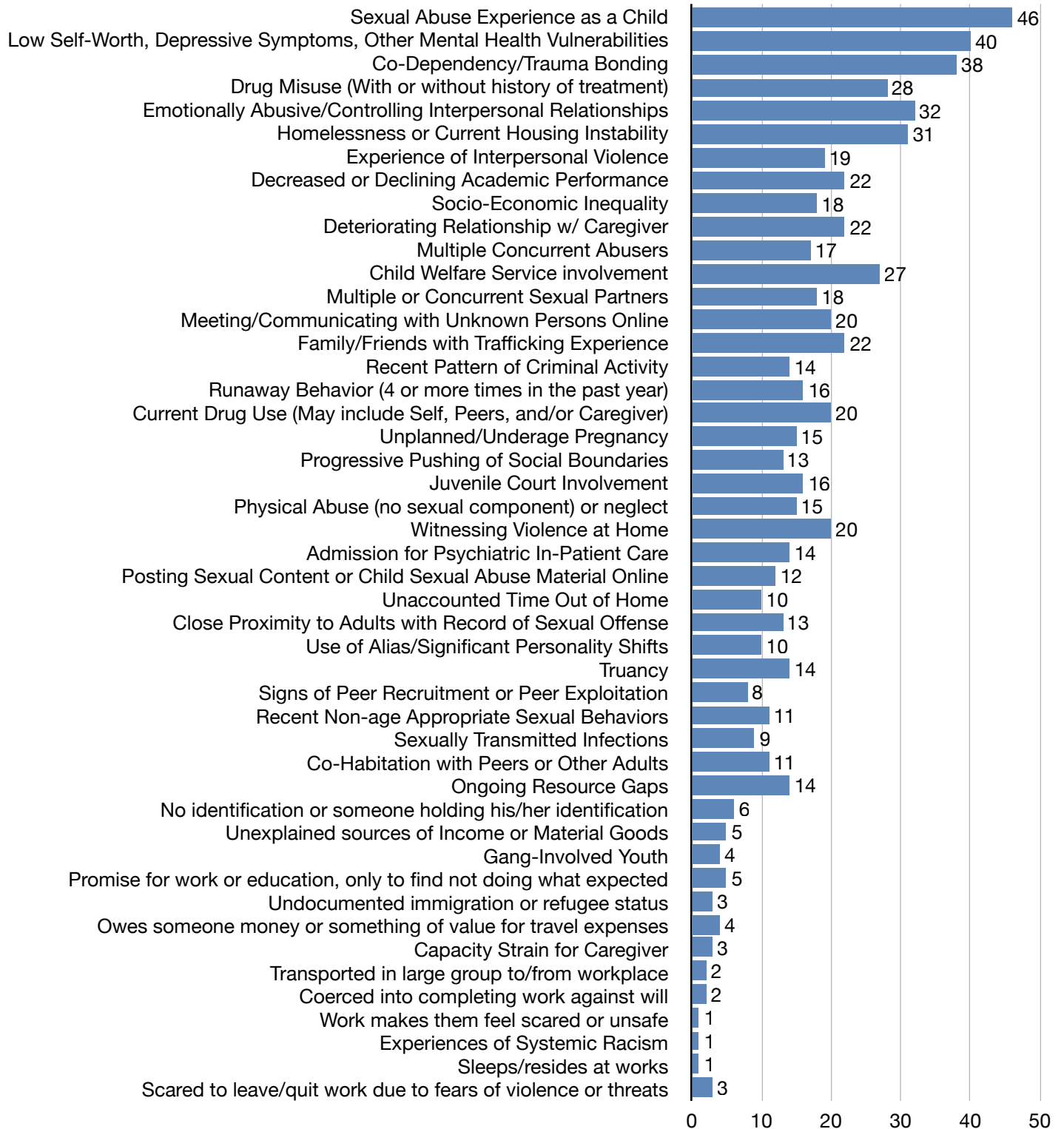
In 30 cases, 10 individuals presented with a cognitive-behavioral or neural disability and 2 presented with a physical or sensory disability. This is consistent with anecdotal accounts throughout the state of traffickers targeting isolated individuals with disabilities.

11 cases involved LGBTQ+ individuals and 10 cases involved homeless youth. Prevention and intersectional risk reduction programs may be considered for LGBTQ+ youth who may face housing instability, financial insecurity, and being ostracized by adults.

Both labor trafficking cases involved a person with immigrant/refugee/asylee status with one of the cases involving concurrent labor and sex trafficking. This highlights the need for preventative educational programming for non-US citizens. It may be helpful to consider barriers this population may encounter due to Limited English Proficiency (4 cases) and Literacy related Barriers (1 case).

Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Figure 6: Risk-Factor Prevalence (n=78)



Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Indicators of Potential Grooming or Undisclosed Trafficking. Based on the frequency of the risk-factors in reported cases (Figure 6) one can develop a hierarchal approach to determining an individual's level of risk for grooming. As one identifies risk factors at each level one can arrive at an increasing likelihood that undisclosed trafficking may be occurring. These preliminary categories will likely be more refined as we unpack composite cases and associate risk groupings with either suspected or confirmed cases. It is important to consider all factors listed below, however by prioritizing risk factors that are most common (Principle Risk-Profile) resources and time can be given to explore the presence of risk factors that are less common but, in combination, potentially clearer indicators of potential ongoing trafficking. Not all factors in a given category below must be present but as more factors in each grouping are identified, confidence that the case involves grooming or trafficking increases. Figure 7 can guide current intake processes, strategic prevention efforts, and advanced identification training for participants regarding proximal and underutilized risk indicators.

Figure 7: Risk-Factor Categories. (n=78)

Principle risk-profile: Highly Prevalent Factors across Most Cases.

- History of Sexual abuse as a Child
- Co-occurring Low Self-Worth/Depressive Symptoms
- Homelessness or Housing Instability
- Indicators of Emotionally Abusive or Controlling Interpersonal Relationships, Co-Dependency or Trauma Bonding



Secondary indicators of elevated risk. Indicators of Violence and Risk Escalation

- Experiences of Interpersonal Violence
- Multiple Concurrent Abusers.
- Declining Academic Performance
- Deteriorating Relationships with Caregivers
- Substance Misuse (Escalated indication of Trafficking/Risk of Exploitation if Co-occurring w/ Prevalent Factors)
- Socio-economic Inequality



Tertiary considerations. Grouping A

Significant Behavioral Changes and ACES

- Meeting Unknown Persons Online,
- Recent Patterns of Criminal Activity
- Friend/Family w/ Trafficking Victim History
- Frequent Runaway Behavior, w
- Witnessing Violence at Home
- Physical Abuse/Neglect
- Current Drug Use or Proximity to Drug Use
- Progressive pushing of Social Boundaries
- Multiple Concurrent Sexual Partners,
- Unplanned Underage Pregnancy
- STIs

Tertiary Consideration. Grouping B

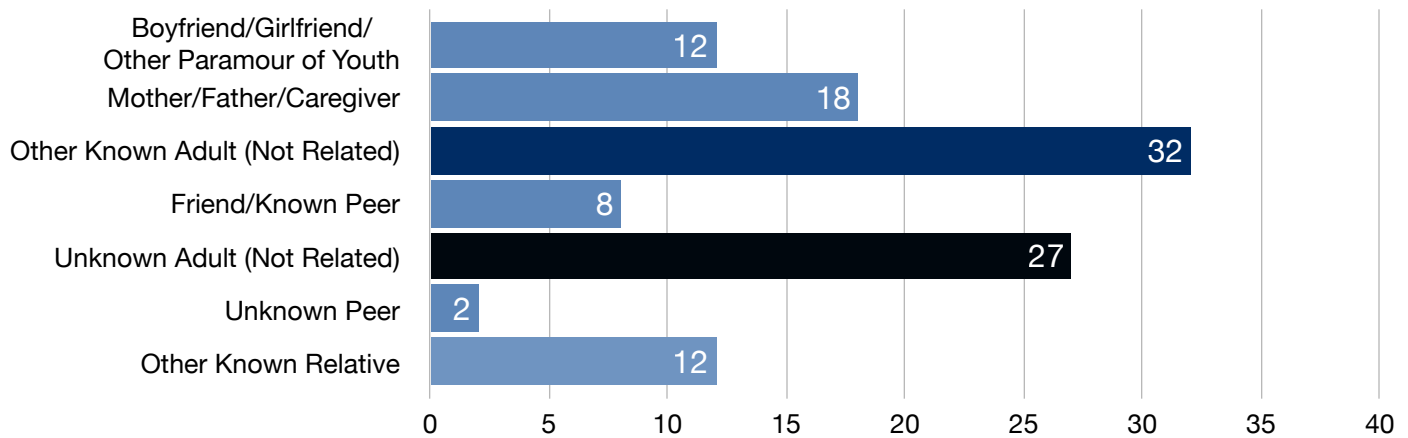
Indicators of Grooming/ Trafficking

- Unaccounted Time Out-of-Home
- Truancy
- Close Proximity to Adult Sexual Offenders
- Use of an Alias
- Significant Personality Shifts
- Psychiatric In-patient
- Posting of Sexual Content/CSAM Online
- Signs of Peer Recruitment
- Non-age Appropriate Sexual Behaviors
- Ongoing Resource gaps
- Co-habitation with Peers or Other Adults

Appalachian Ohio: Offender Case Profiles

Offender Case Demographics: (Total Offenders n=111, 33 Cases reported multiple alleged offenders)

Figure 9: Offender Relation to Individual



In cases involving adult survivors of trafficking, non-related adults and unknown adults comprised the majority of offender types. Meanwhile, in cases involving children under the age of 17, the offender was most often a parent or caregiver with the second most common offender group consisting of perceived paramours of the youth (Figure 9). This is consistent with the elevated risk of grooming based on access to youth and perceived trust. It indicates an increased need to investigate familial trafficking and add related questions to youth screening tools. Most alleged offenders are white males (87%) between the ages of 30 to 39 years old (Figures 10, 11, and 12) Prosecution data shows that in most cases charges had not been filed at time of reporting. However, across 9 cases charges were filed for non-trafficking sexual offenses including rape and/or gross sexual imposition. In two cases, where referrals were made by task forces, federal charges had been pressed.

Further data is needed as to how a particular offender population exploits vulnerabilities and how to engage protective factors to reduce risk. Emerging intervention tools such as early identification screenings, psycho-educational programs like End the Game, and mentor/support programs like Elevate Academy can reduce risk of exploitation and help those most commonly impacted recognize the signs of grooming. Further data is needed to determine if survivor/victim profiles and offender profiles align with vulnerable population statistics in Appalachia or if identification processes need to be optimized to find under-identified groups such as labor trafficking, those with cognitive disabilities, LGBTQ+ and linguistically isolated individuals.

Figure 10: Offender Age (n=52)

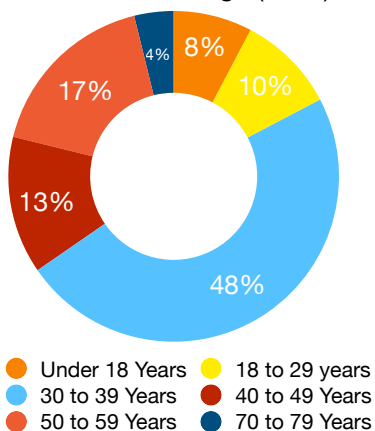


Figure 11: Offender Gender (n=61)

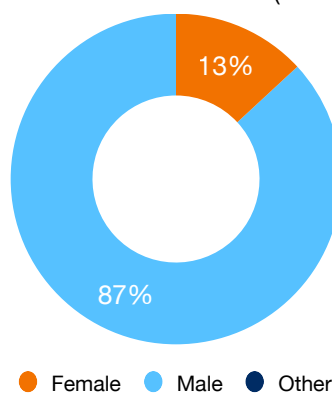
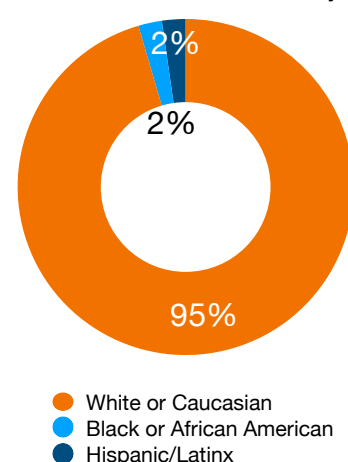


Figure 12: Offender Race/Ethnicity (n=44)



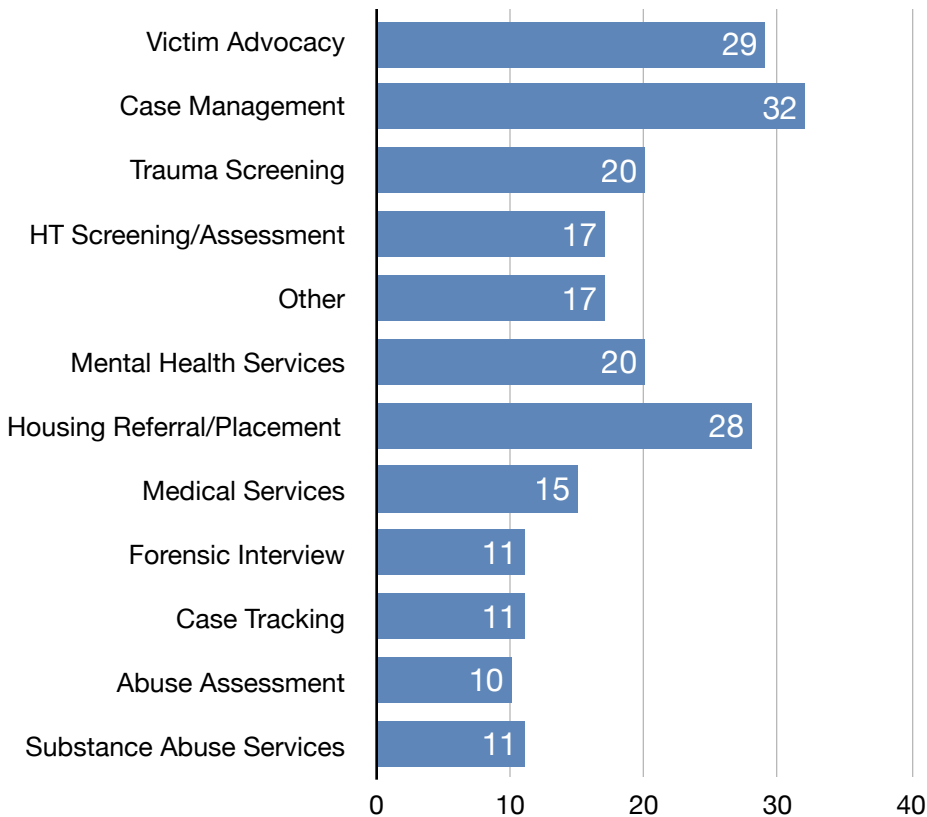
Appalachian Ohio: Services and Additional Findings

Screening and Identification:

Looking at how service networks across Appalachian Ohio screen or identify potential trafficking victims or survivors responses were coded into 4 categories.

Based on 79 responses, most agencies reported that cases are identified via structured or semi-structured verbal interview with professionally trained staff. The second most common approach involves the use of screening tools. Given the lack of development and consensus around verified trafficking-specific screening tools, many of these screenings are composites of the current best options available. Among the screening instruments that have been combined include questions from Child Sex Trafficking Forensic Interview Trainings, resources from Shared Hope International, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Trafficking in Persons screening tool, the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign tool, and other government agencies. A few agencies receive referrals from outside sources that screen and identify trafficking victims prior to their intake.

Figure 13: Agency Count by Services Provided



Services response: (n=79)

Figure 13 illustrates the number of agencies throughout Appalachian Ohio that provide various services. Victim and family advocacy, case coordination and management, and housing referrals are among the most commonly available. However, vital services such as ongoing medical care, forensic interviewing, abuse assessments, and substance abuse and misuse services remain underrepresented. This is likely a result of this effort not reaching all service providers.

13 centers listed 'other' services available. These include outside referrals for the services listed, vulnerable population education, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, transportation assistance, legal services and advocacy, job training/ vocational assistance emergency shelter access and crisis services.

Questions for Future Consideration:

- How does your agency approach human trafficking cases or those vulnerabilities associated with higher risk for trafficking?
- What can we do to prevent human trafficking through focus on these vulnerabilities?
- What resources for human trafficking cases are you aware of?
- What do you need to enhance your agency's response to trafficking?
- What is the greatest challenge your agency encounters regarding trafficking cases?
- What is one of the most effective approaches you are aware of regarding trafficking cases?
- What does the future of Appalachian human trafficking prevention and response look like?
- What do you or your agency need to make this a reality?



This survey is supported by Christi Scott Bartman's Health & Human Services *Pillar of Prosperity* Fellowship through the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO) and its *I'm A Child of Appalachia*® Fund. Christi founded the anti-human trafficking initiative, Eyes Up Appalachia, and FAO is pleased to advance her efforts to build awareness of human trafficking across Appalachian Ohio. Through its Pillar Fellowships, FAO supports individuals advancing worthwhile initiatives across five Pillars of Prosperity known to increase quality of life, including Health & Human Services. FAO is grateful for Christi's leadership in this work.



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NOTE: This study is simply an initial effort to gather data. It is not definitive as not all agencies that see a person that is being trafficked or at high risk of being trafficked participated. There is also the potential for duplicate data although those with specific case details were screened to ensure that was not the case.